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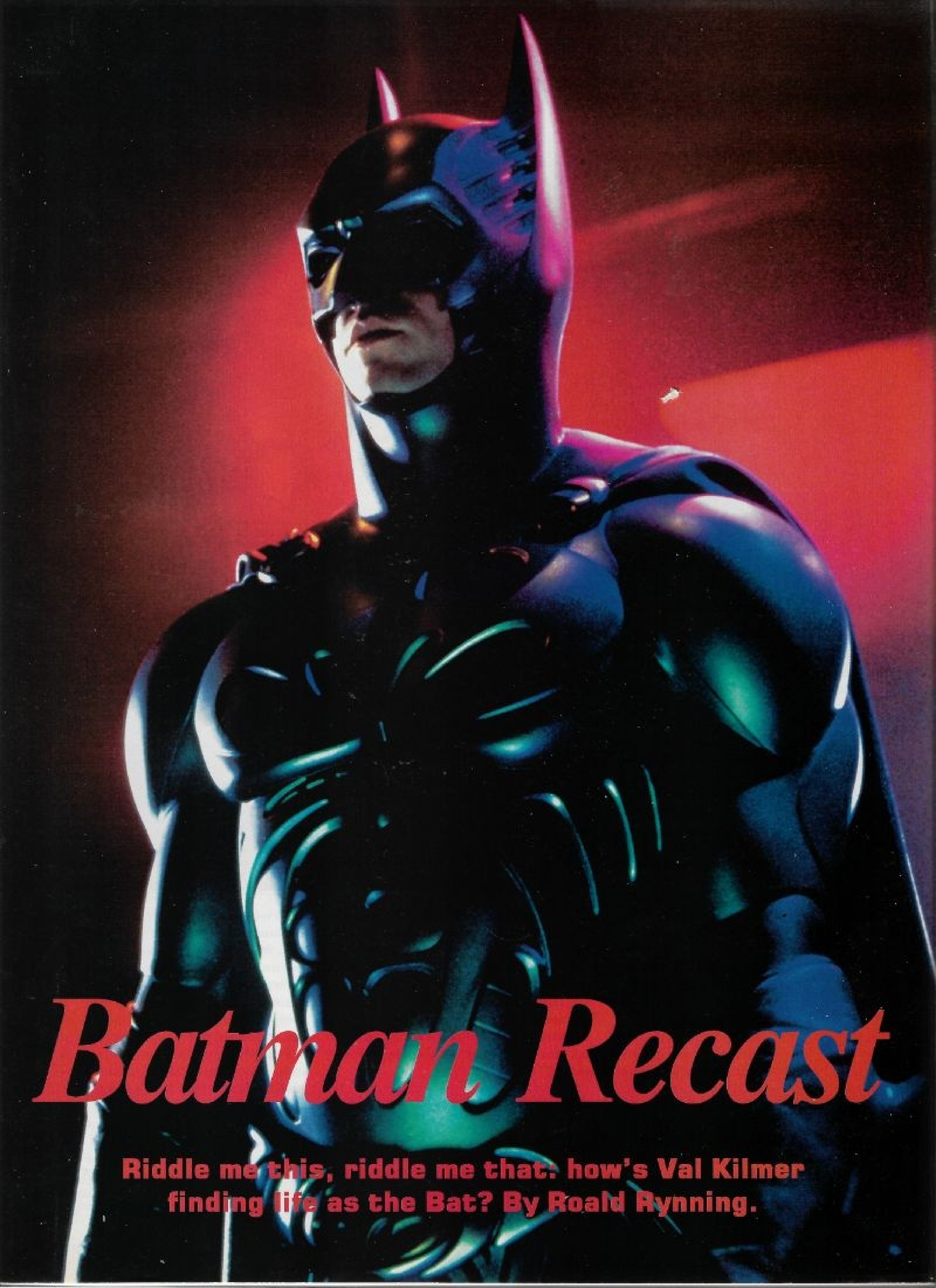
# FILM REVIEW

ALL THE NEW MOVIES & VIDEOS

Visual Imagination Publication

# DREDD V BATMAN

**Sylvester Stallone and Val Kilmer talk to Film Review as JUDGE DREDD and BATMAN FOREVER go head to head**



# Batman Recast

**Riddle me this, riddle me that: how's Val Kilmer finding life as the Bat? By Roald Rynning.**

Will he be Batman Forever — or will
Bruce Wayne decide to hang up the Batsuit for good?

Along with an almost entirely new cast, *Batman Forever* features some stunning new designs — including a different Batcave and Batmobile

IN 1986, square-jawed and movie-star handsome Val Kilmer nearly stole **Top Gun** away from Tom Cruise. Ever since, Hollywood has expected the cool and sexy Californian to become the hottest hot-shot in town.

But despite *being* Jim Morrison in Oliver Stone's much-hyped biopic **The Doors** and stealing everything but the cameras as Doc Holliday in **Tombstone**, both films belly-flopped at the box office, and Kilmer's career has gone nowhere.

In addition, the charismatic actor has an indisputable talent for picking the crappiest scripts in Tinseltown.

His lists of duds is endless: **Top Secret!**, **Willow**, **Kill Me Again**, **The Real McCoy**, **Thunderheart**, **Real Genius**, the unreleased **Dead Girl**...

Then look at the list of hits he turned down: **Blue Velvet**, **Flatliners**, **Backdraft**, **In the Line of Fire**, **Indecent Proposal**. What the hell was Kilmer thinking?

"I'm interested in the role, not the movie," he defends his unusual career choices. "I've always tried to pick roles that have a real personal involvement for me. I'm trying to use my work to fight the kind of casting that locks one into just one kind of role. I try to pick the roles where I can learn something of the subject, or something on the character."

So, he doesn't envy **Top Gun** co-star Tom Cruise's mega career?

"I never wanted that world," he answers. "My career will always be eclectic because of my taste."

Ironically, Kilmer even turned down his only pre-Batman hit, **Top Gun**, and was forced into doing it due to his contract with Paramount.

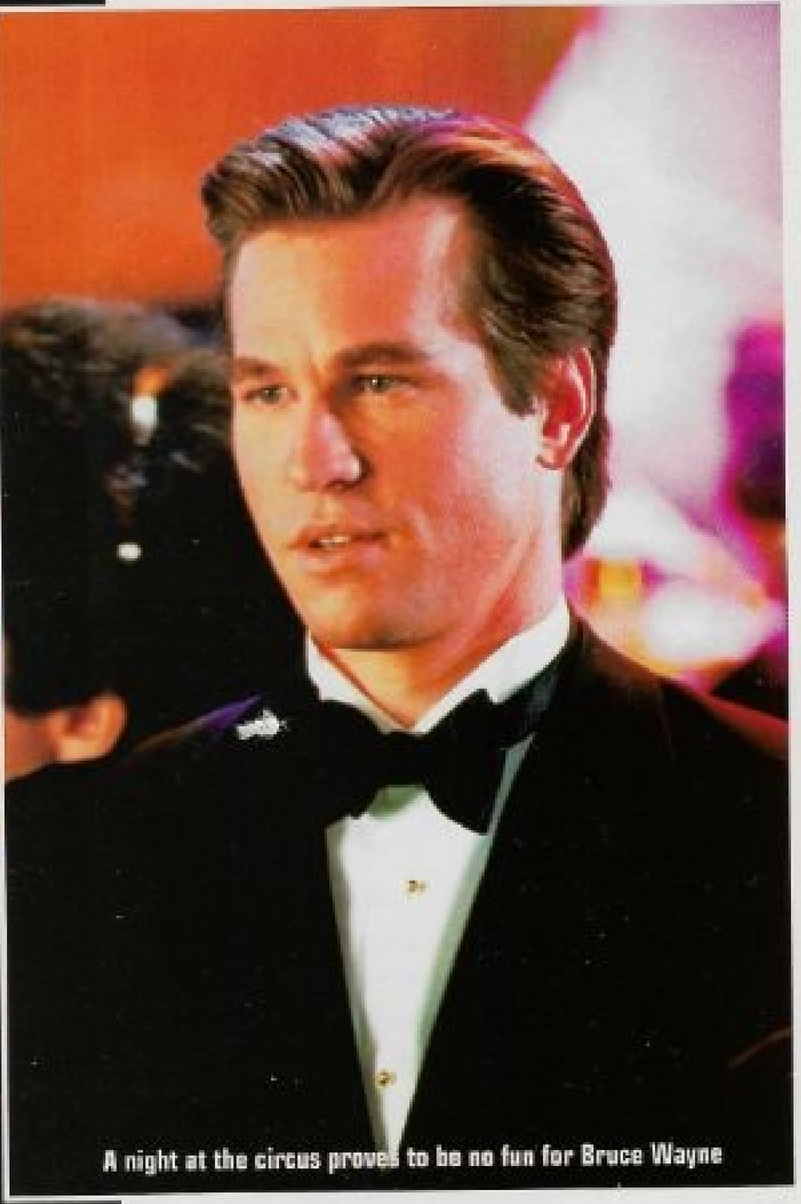
So how come he quite readily accepted to step into the Batsuit vacated by Michael Keaton?

*"I was in third grade when the TV show came out, and my friends and I would play Batman."*

"It was an extraordinary opportunity and it sounded like fun, so I said yes," answers Val, who was in the South African desert researching a film about witch doctors when he was told that director Joel Schumacher wanted him for **Batman Forever**. "I had met Joel before discussing some other movies, and I liked him. I knew playing Batman was my destiny when my agent told me the exact day I was picked for the role, and I realized that on that day I had been in a cave with bats!"

Of course, it didn't hurt that he was a Batman fan as well.

"I was in third grade when the 60s' TV show came out, and my friends and I would play Batman," he recalls. "I even got to sit in the Batmobile once. My mother knew a



A night at the circus proves to be no fun for Bruce Wayne

man who did special effects for the series, and he invited me on the set."

The Batmobile in **Batman Forever** is much bigger (25 feet long, 10 feet high) than the original, and much better, according to the new Batman.

"It was so much fun to go to work," smiles the actor, who never regretted taking on the 40-pound rubber suit. Even when it got unbearably hot. "It was 40 degrees in there. I felt like I was steaming myself. Also, in the suit my body moved much slower than usual. I couldn't see, or breathe, or hear. Then my body started to ache."

No method acting was required for the job, he claims. Just some help to get in and out of the suit.

"My preparation for this role was to get dressed," he jokes, a smile spreading across his face. "No point to do any more. I mean, I could only act with my lips. Occasionally with a nostril, or an eyelid." He laughs. "It made it much easier for me to do the job."

One time, while he was getting helped into the suit, his wife, British actress Joanne Whalley, called and asked him what he was doing. "I answered honestly that I had eight hands on my body," tells Val.

*"My preparation for this role was to get dressed. I could only act with my lips."*

And what did she say?

"Should I call back later?"

With a beauty that photographer Bruce Weber would salivate over: luminous eyes, cheekboned and thick-lipped, Kilmer was cut out for stardom. His sultry masculinity has given Batman a sexuality never evident before. It has also sparked a batch of gay jokes about the superhero housemates. Introducing Chris O'Donnell as Robin, with pierced ear and crew-cut, the father-son relationship that O'Donnnell and Keaton would have had has been replaced by a more homoerotic relationship. Kilmer doesn't go along with these insinuations.

"Batman and Robin don't have a homosexual relationship in the movie," he insists. "From Bruce Wayne's point of view, he and Dick Grayson are like brother-son, because they shared the same traumatic experience of seeing their parents die before them."

Besides sex appeal, Kilmer is known for his intense working method. The actor has often become his parts, even insisting everyone called him Jim during the filming of **The Doors.** And his run-ins with producer George Lucas, and directors Martha Coolidge, Michael Apted and Oliver Stone are legendary.

"I didn't learn until **Tombstone** that acting isn't as hard as I originally thought," he admits. "My style of working was nuts at first. I apologized to George Lucas for two

# KNOW YOUR BATMEN

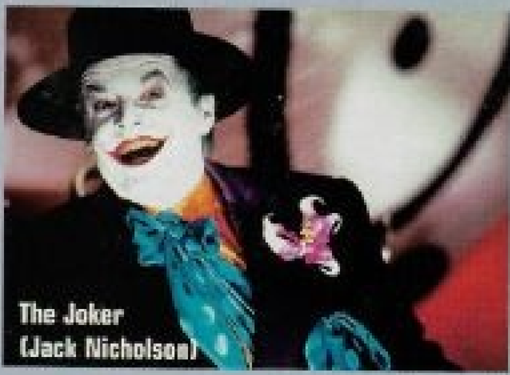
**Name:** Batman (1960s)
**Played by:** Adam West
**Movies:** *Batman* (1966)
**He Wears:** Blue satin cowl, cape and gauntlets and blue satin underpants over a grey body stocking
**Casual clothes:** Cardigans
**He Drives:** State of the art, petrol-powered Batmobile (which is made to go faster by speeding up the film…)
**Accompanied by:** Robin, the Boy Wonder, played by Burt Ward
**Butlered by:** Alfred, played by Alan Napier
**Enemies:** The Joker, The Riddler, The Penguin, Catwoman
**In love with:** Russian Miss Kitka, who happens to be that feline felon, Catwoman
**Had sex with:** What's sex?
**Strange Habits:** Everything he owns has a label stuck to it explaining what it is.
**Most perilous escapade:** Nearly being propelled into the air by the Joker's deadly jack in the box into the waiting tentacles of the Penguin's exploding octopus...
**Psychoses:** No worries — this is the Sixties, man
**Sex appeal:** Four out of ten
**Why he's not in *Batman Forever*:** Past his prime

**Name:** Batman (animated)
**Played by:** Kevin Conroy
**Movies**: *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*
**He Wears:** Animated grey body stocking, blue cowl, gauntlets and a h-u-g-e cape. Hard to tell, but it could be the satin number…
**Casual clothes:** V-neck pullovers
**He Drives:** Mega super-sleek high technology Batmobile. Hey — this is a cartoon, so they only had to draw it!
**Accompanied by:** Goes it alone for the movie
**Butlered by:** Alfred, voiced by Efrem Zimbalist Jr
**Enemies:** The Phantasm, The Joker
**In love with:** Andrea Beaumont, who's got strange tastes in night wear
**Had sex with:** No one. He's a cartoon, and doesn't have a todger
**Strange Habits:** Talks to gravestones and spends half his movie having flashbacks
**Most perilous escapade:** Trapped in Gotham World Fair as it goes nuclear
**Psychoses:** Deep trauma over parents' deaths
**Sex appeal:** Zero out of ten
**Why he's not in *Batman Forever*:** He's not real

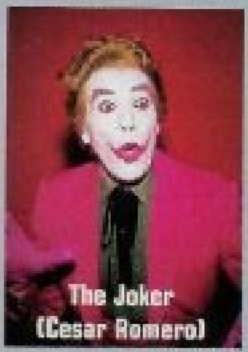
**Name:** Batman (Tim Burton version)
**Played by:** Michael Keaton
**Movies:** *Batman* (1989), *Batman Returns* (1992)
**He Wears:** Rock-hard body-armour bristling with weaponry
**Casual clothes:** Cardigans
**He Drives:** State of the art, nuclear powered Batmobile
**Accompanied by:** No one. This guy's a real loner
**Butlered by:** Alfred, played by Michael Gough
**Enemies:** The Joker, Catwoman, The Penguin
**In love with:** Vicki Vale, Selina Kyle — who happens to be that fastidious female fugitive Catwoman
**Had sex with:** Vicki Vale
**Strange Habits:** Leaves two roses in the middle of the street once a year
**Most perilous escapade:** Being trapped in the Batmobile when it is under the Penguin's remote control
**Psychoses:** Deep trauma over parents' deaths
**Sex appeal:** Six out of ten
**Why he's not in *Batman Forever*:** Had better things to do — or so he says

**Name:** Batman (today's model)
**Played by:** Val Kilmer
**Movies:** *Batman Forever*
**He Wears:** Rock hard muscle suit (with nipples!), brimming with weaponry
**Casual clothes:** Could be time to get the cardigans out
**He Drives:** A better re-designed Batmobile that can drive up walls
**Accompanied by:** Robin, aka orphan Dick Grayson, played by Chris O'Donnell
**Butlered by:** Alfred, played by Michael Gough
**Enemies:** The Riddler, Harvey Two-Face Dent
**In love with:** Meridian Chase, played by Nicole Kidman
**Had sex with:** Give him a chance!
**Strange Habits:** Considers giving up the night job; does the roses bit
**Most perilous escapade:** Attempting to rescue Robin and Meridian Chase from the Riddler's base on Claw Island
**Psychoses:** Deep trauma over parents' deaths
**Sex appeal:** Eight out of ten
**Why he's not in *Batman Forever*:** Er... he is

## AND THE VILLAINS...

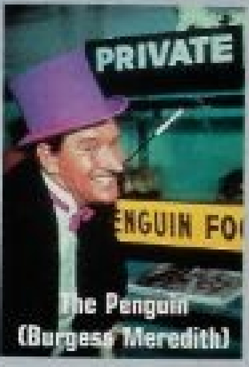

The Joker (Jack Nicholson)

Catwoman (Lee Meriwether)

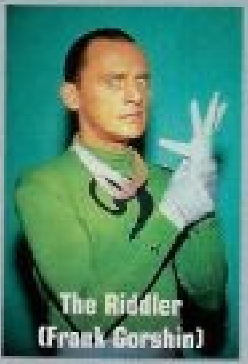

The Joker (Cesar Romero)

Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer)

The Penguin (Danny DeVito)



The Penguin (Burgess Meredith)


The Riddler (Frank Gorshin)

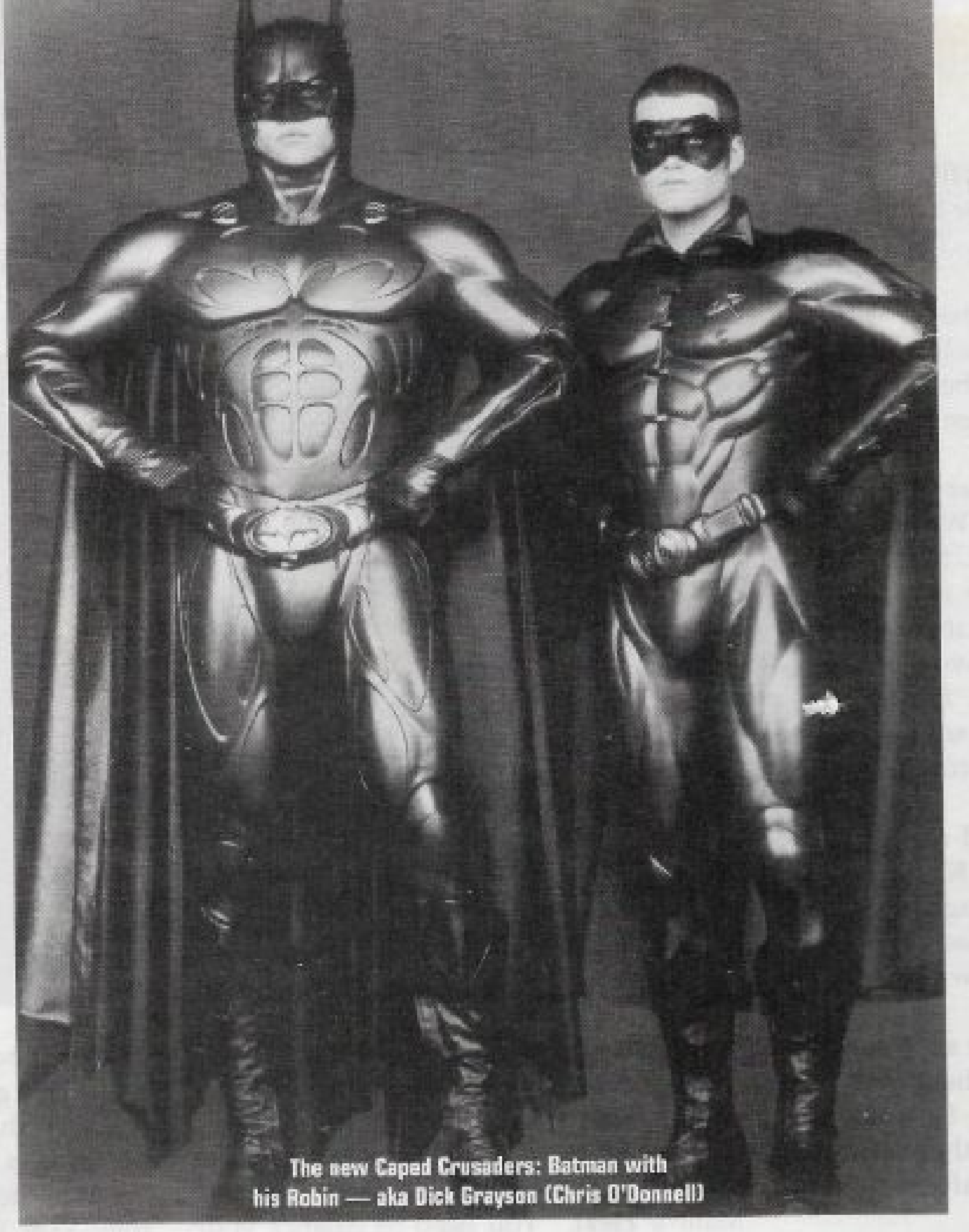
Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) and The Riddler (Jim Carrey)

years after doing **Willow**!

"I have messed up certain working relationships because of my attitude," adds Kilmer. "I don't do that anymore. During the **Batman** shoot, there were rumours of Jim Carrey and me not getting on. His impulsive pranks supposedly clashed with my method acting. And this even before we had met! On our first day together we talked about it. I never had any problems working with him, though. The only problem was not to laugh."

Of course, on the high-tech, action-filled **Batman Forever**, there were plenty of stunts to perform: falling out of a helicopter, being buried alive, walking through fire... Any mishaps on the set?

"In one scene Drew Barrymore [who plays Sugar, Two-Face's sexy girlfriend] asks Batman out on a date. She's got this glowing green key, made with some toxic stuff. The prop man said, 'Be careful with it because it works using friction and heat, and if you're not careful, it'll explode'. And a little while later, when he set it down, it exploded! Luckily he wasn't closer, or he would have looked like Two-Face!"


The new Caped Crusaders: Batman with his Robin — aka Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell)

The 100-day-plus shoot was hard on Kilmer, but he was no stranger to long jobs.

"**Willow** had an almost six month long schedule, six-day weeks in three different countries," he says. "Hamlet talks for two-and-a-half straight hours if you collect all his dialogue. That was demanding. I tend to pick jobs that way."

Part Cherokee Indian, Kilmer was born on New Year's Eve in 1959 and grew up in Chatsworth, California, north of Los Angeles. His father was a real-estate developer, who divorced his mother when Val was nine. He spent a good part of his youth with grandparents in the Southwest, an area he likes so much he has settled his own family there — in New Mexico.

*"There were rumours of Jim Carrey and me not getting on... even before we had met!"*

At twelve, he was discovered at a school play and started his career in commercials for hamburgers.

"Everything I liked about acting and actors, I noticed came from people who had stage experience," he recalls. "To be good, it seemed to me, you had to come from a theatre background. People told me that the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts was the best place to learn, so I went off to England, hoping to enrol there. Unfortunately, I was only 15 at the time, and too young. So I came back home and finished high school."

When his younger brother, Wesley, drowned in 1977 he applied to and was accepted — at age 17 — as the youngest student ever to the Julliard acting programme.

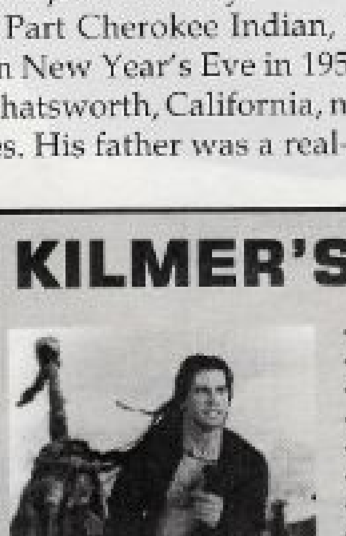
"It was a place to make sense of my brother's death, to apply it to my life," he says of the drama studies. "Wesley made movies. The understanding he gave me about art and life was a gift."

His career took off like a rocket. While at Julliard, he co-wrote a play, *How it All Began*, which he starred in at Broadway. After making a documentary about nuclear arms and plans for a peaceful future, called **Journey to Magna**, he performed Shakespeare on stage (he played Richard III, Macbeth and Hamlet). He still finds stage work "the most fulfilling thing I can do and get paid for".

While Batman's weakness is girls, according to Kilmer, the actor is tight-lipped about his own private life.

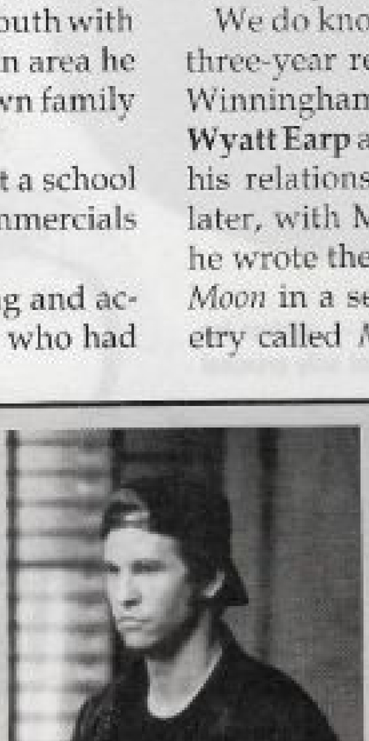
We do know that at high school he had a three-year relationship with actress Mare Winningham (Kevin Costner's wife in both **Wyatt Earp** and **The War**). Then, there were his relationships with Cher in 1983, and later, with Michelle Pfeiffer (about whom he wrote the poem *The Pfeiffer Howls at the Moon* in a self-published collection of poetry called *My Eden After Burns*). In 1983,

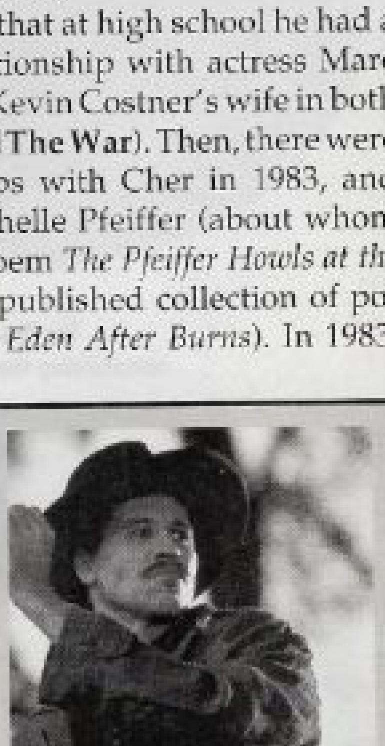
## KILMER'S CAREER


*Willow*

*The Doors*

*Kill Me Again*


*The Real McCoy*


*Tombstone*

while in London filming his film début **Top Secret!**, he fell for his wife, who was performing *The Genius* in the West End.

"I used to wait for her outside the stage entrance and follow her to a local bar," he remembers. But he never had the courage to approach her.

Five years later, on the set of George Lucas's Fantasy dud **Willow**, he was more forward. He repeatedly invited his now co-star out to dinner and the theatre. He endlessly sent her flowers. Eventually, she accepted. He claims that he "just wore her out". When they finished shooting **Willow**, they married.

The couple, who reunited on the screen in the forgettable **Kill Me Again**, live with their daughter, Mercedes, on a thirty-acre ranch in New Mexico, far away from Hollywood.

Bruce Wayne is still cared for by the trusty Alfed (Michael Gough)

"It never worried me," he says of being removed from the buzz of the film industry. "I feel safer in Santa Fe than Los Angeles. Criminals love it there. There's so many freeways to get on after you have scored."

Still he brought his wife and three-and-a-half year old daughter to Los Angeles for the filming of **Batman Forever**.

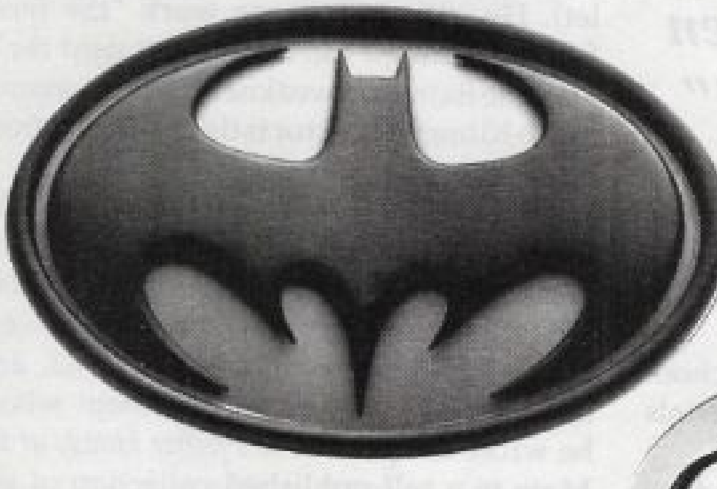
"I have turned down films that I knew might gain me power in the industry because Joanne has been working," says Kilmer, who next will be seen opposite Robert De Niro and Al Pacino in Michael Mann's **Heat**. "You need to balance your career and lifestyle to make a marriage work."

There will be two more Batman films for Kilmer. And he looks forward to the work.

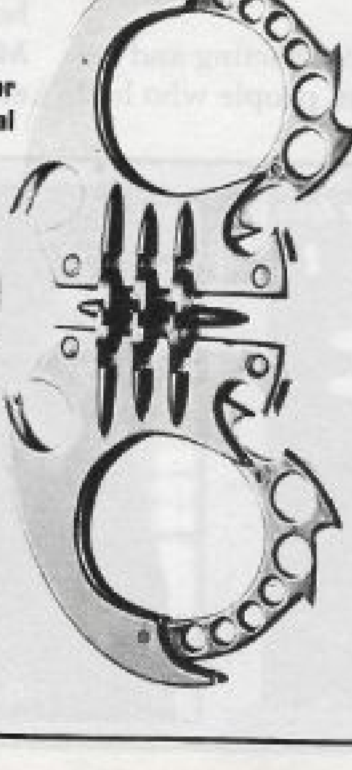
"It was a great set to work on and the most fun was that everybody working on the production brought their children to visit. It was just too much seeing kids' faces when they saw me, a six-foot five-inch man dressed up as a bat. Their reactions were so cute. You could see their imagination running."

## THE BAT ARSENAL

Zap!, Pow!, Zonk!, Splat!... No self respecting crimefighter should risk the streets of Gotham City without a utility belt bulging with deadly weapons. And Batman's arsenal has never been more impressive...

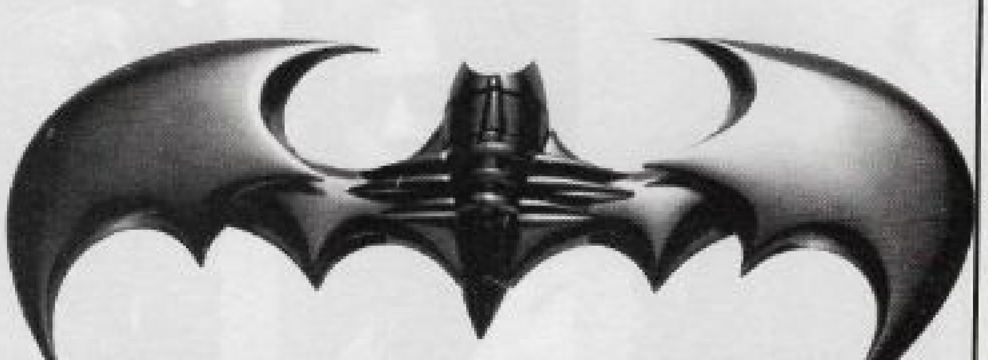


The gauntlet of Batman's batsuit, able to fire off high velocity Batarangs

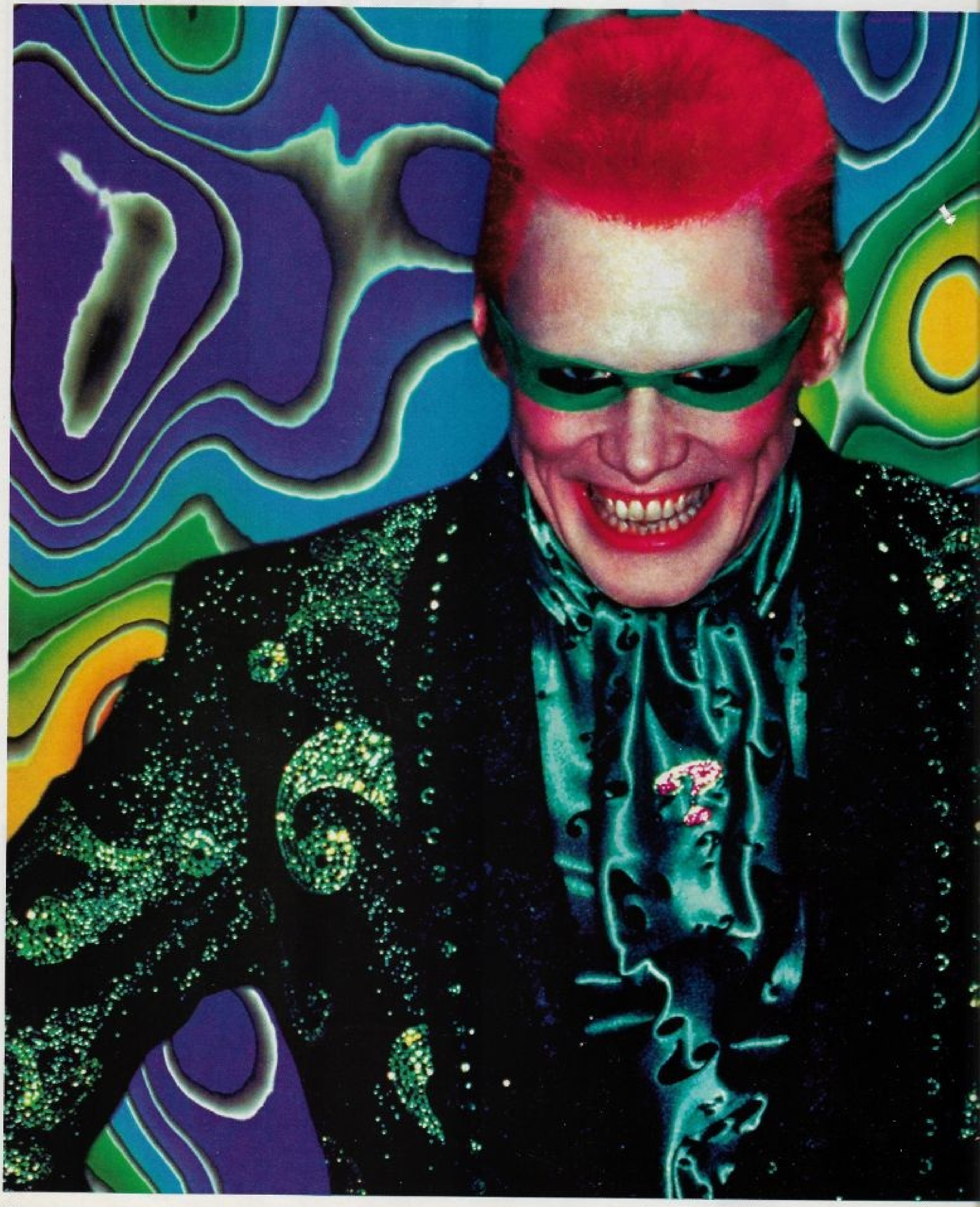


The Batcuffs — perfect for immobilizing the most wily criminal

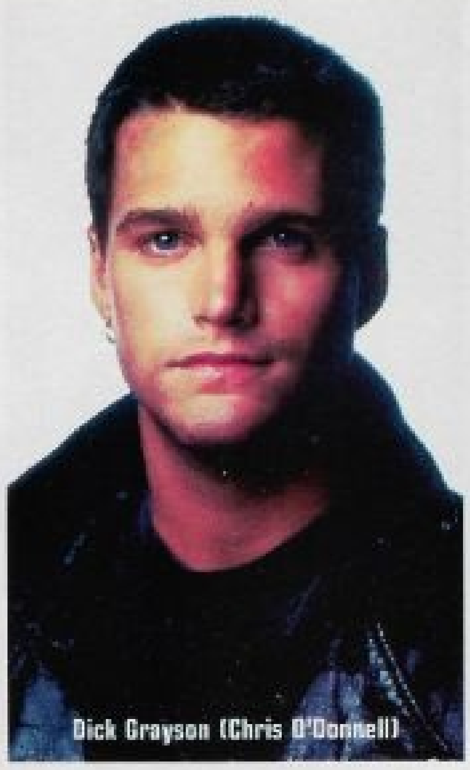
The new, improved, mega-lethal silver Batarang, as fired from Batman's gauntlet

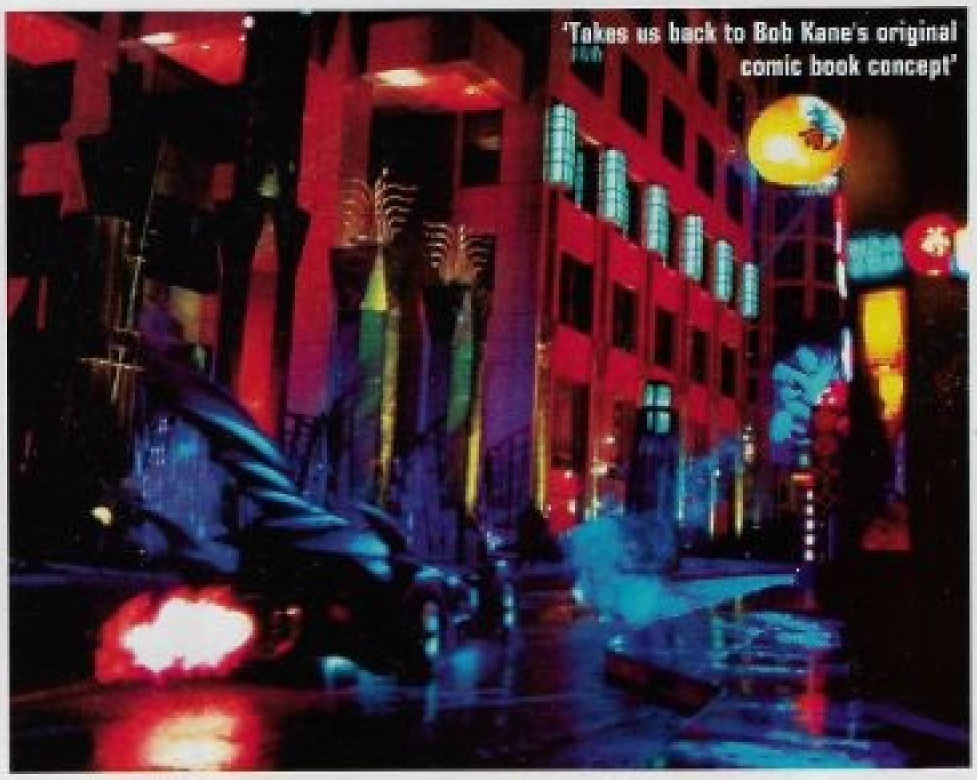


Batman's more traditional black Batarang



Jim Carrey as the scene-stealing Riddler


Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell)


'Takes us back to Bob Kane's original comic book concept'

SPOTLIGHT

# BATMAN FOREVER

★★★★

Stars: **Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones, Jim Carrey, Nicole Kidman, Chris O'Donnell**
Director: **Joel Schumacher**
Certificate: **TBC**
Running Time: **2hrs 2mins**
Opening Date: **July 14**

The Dark Knight returns in a lighter, upbeat sequel.

Unlike its two predecessors, this sequel splashes onto the screen in a kaleidoscope of colour and action that never lets up. Director Joel Schumacher, in revamping the look of Gotham City, takes us back to Bob Kane's original comic book concept. It is a refreshing change from the dark Wagnerian interpretation served up by Tim Burton.

Effortlessly taking over the cape left behind by Michael Keaton, Val Kilmer makes a sexy and vulnerable Batman/ Bruce Wayne. Holding his own against the outrageous onslaught of Jim Carrey as The Riddler, and Tommy Lee Jones as Harvey Two-Face, Kilmer's heroic presence does the Caped Crusader justice — not an easy task when you have the hyper-kinetic Carrey stealing the spotlight each time he appears on screen.

As usual, Gotham City is being terrorized by an unscrupulous villain, this time in the form of Harvey Two-Face, a former DA, who, after being disfigured by acid, is on the road to revenge. As if that wasn't bad enough news for Batman, the Dark Knight is also faced with a puzzling adversary, Edward Nygma, whose obsession is to control people's minds. E Nygma transforms himself into The Riddler and joins forces with Harvey Two-face to unmask Batman. Add to the mix police psychologist Chase Meredian (Nicole Kidman), who succumbs to the charms of both Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne. Attending a charity circus performance their paths fatefully cross with Dick Grayson/Robin, who performs in a trapeze act with his family. In an accident orchestrated by Harvey Two-Face, Grayson witnesses the death of his family, filling him with a deep desire for revenge. The boy's athletic skills and prowess qualify him to become an able partner to Batman. Chris O'Donnell comes across with strength and assurance making a vivid impression as the Boy Wonder.

Visually, **Batman Forever** is a feast for the senses and technical expertise glows in every shot. The use of vibrant colour, reminiscent of **Dick Tracy**, enhances this new vision of Gotham.

This comic-book excursion in the lives of the Dynamic Duo is recommended, taking the audience on a roller-coaster ride through fun-filled action, thrills and romance.

*Judy Sloane*

Tommy Lee goes Two-Faced

'*Batman Forever* is a feast for the senses'